

Remarks

The specification has been amended to make editorial changes therein to place the application in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

Claims 1-6 and 8-9 were rejected as anticipated by SCHNECK et al. 5,933,498. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested in view of the new claims.

SCHNECK et al. describe a system for accessing data in which data access is granted based on a set of rules. The Official Action points to columns 17-20 of this reference. As described therein, whenever a user wants to access the data, the access mechanism determines whether the rules are available for a deciding whether to grant access to the data. As explained at columns 19-20, there are three situations; (1) the rules are with the data, (2) the rules are already in the access mechanism, and (3) there are no rules. In the first two situations, the rules are made available (Figure 11, at connector "E"). If there are no rules, the user is asked to provide the rules. If the user provides the rules, the rules are verified and made available. If the user cannot provide the rules, the process is aborted.

The Official Action takes the position that the rules in SCHNECK et al. correspond to the proxy letter claimed herein. Following this logic, if one replaces "rules" in the above description with "proxy letter," then SCHNECK et al. describe

situations in which (1) the proxy letter is with the data, (2) the proxy letter is already in the access mechanism, and (3) there is no proxy letter. In the first two situations, the proxy letter is made available. If there is no proxy letter, the user is asked to provide the proxy letter. If the user provides the proxy letter, the proxy letter is verified and made available. If the user cannot provide the proxy letter, the process is aborted. That is, this portion of SCHNECK et al. describes the steps for making the proxy letter (rules) available.

However, SCHNECK et al. do not disclose or suggest a step of determining, for a started action and based on the proxy letter, whether (a) the proxy letter is allowed to handle the started action without direct user involvement or (b) direct user involvement is required to handle the started action. As above, if one replaces "proxy letter" with "rules," SCHNECK et al. do not disclose determining, for a started action and based on the rules, whether (a) the rules are allowed to handle the started action without direct user involvement or (b) direct user involvement is required to handle the started action. SCHNECK et al. describe what happens if the proxy letter (rules) is not available, but not making a choice whether the rules themselves will handle the started action or whether direct user intervention is required.

Further, there is no situation in SCHNECK et al. in which the decision is made to proceed if the rules will not handle the started action. That is, there is no option to proceed if the rules are not met; there is no option for direct user involvement as an alternative to the rules as in the present claims. In SCHNECK et al., there is no alternative to the rules and thus there cannot be a step of determining, for a started action and based on the proxy letter, whether (a) the proxy letter is allowed to handle the started action without direct user involvement or (b) direct user involvement is required to handle the started action.

Accordingly, the new claims avoid the rejection under §102.

Claim 7 was rejected as unpatentable over SCHNECK et al. in view of BELANGER et al. US2001/0014839. The new claims avoid the rejection under §103 for the reasons given above, in view of the failure of BELANGER et al. to make up for the shortcomings noted above. There is no option of direct user involvement and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

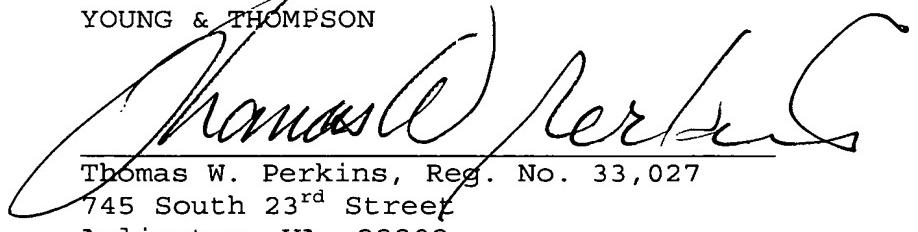
In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Application No. 09/460,376
Amdt. dated February 2, 2004
Reply to Office Action of July 31, 2003
Docket No. 1515-1012

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. §1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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